

Findley House
3606 N Street, N.W.
(Georgetown)
Washington
District of Columbia

HABS No. DC-192

HABS,
DC,
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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

FINDLEY HOUSE

Location: 3606 N Street, N.W. (Georgetown), Washington, D.C.

Present Owners: President and Directors of Georgetown College (1969).

Present Occupants: Rental tenants (1969).

Present Use: Residence (1969).

Significance: Built originally as a rental structure to house people performing neighborhood services, this post-bellum dwelling has been renovated but its scale and proportions have been maintained, unifying and preserving the harmonious row of simple, modest houses so characteristic of the western part of Georgetown.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1866.
2. Architect: None known.
3. Original and subsequent owners: The building is located on Square 1223, Lot 815 (formerly Square 53, Lot 62 in Peter, Beatty, Threlkeld and Deakins' Addition to Georgetown). Its original address was 113 First Street. The following is an incomplete chain of title to the property on which the structure stands. Reference is to the Office of the Recorder of Deeds, Washington, D.C.

1861 Robert L. Martin et ux Mary E. to Thomas E. Duvall.
Deed August 7, 1861. Recorded September 6, 1861.
Liber JAS 211, folio 305. Thomas E. Duvall died; his
widow, Mary E. Fernald Duvall, married John T.
Findley.

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- 1871 John T. Findley et ux Mary E. to Hugh Caperton, trustee. Deed in trust January 20, 1871. Recorded February 3, 1871. Liber 634, folio 474. "...to hold in trust for Mary E. Findley during her life...with power to said Mary E. Findley to direct the sale of said premises...in event of John T. Findley surviving said Mary E. Findley, then in trust to convey to said John T. Findley...."
- 1899 Mary E. Findley died December 7, 1899. Her Will, dated May 19, 1897, states: "After the death of my beloved husband, John T. Findley, to Mrs. E.A. Leonard I give and devise during her life--house and premises 3606 N Street, N.W., and after her death to Bridget A. Coleman, and after her death to Georgetown University...." Will May 19, 1897. Probated October 20, 1908. Will Book 70, page 11. Administration 9280.
- 1907 John T. Findley died December 31, 1907. Estate petition July 31, 1909. Probated August 31, 1909. Administration Docket Book 40, page 16215. Administration 16215.
- 1908 Edward C. Fernald, widower, Golibart D. Fernald & wife, George W. Fernald, widower, Grace Fernald (heirs-at-law and next of kin to Mary E. Findley) to George E. Fleming. Deed in Trust January 7, 1908. Recorded March 23, 1908. Liber 3141, folio 244.
- 1908 George E. Fleming to George W. Fernald. Deed in Trust March 7, 1908. Recorded March 23, 1908. Liber 3141, folio 247.
- 1908 George W. Fernald, trustee under Deed in Trust from George E. Fleming to President and Directors of Georgetown College. Deed in Trust March 2, 1908. Recorded October 19, 1908. Liber 3175, folio 344.
- "...subject however to suffer and permit Elizabeth A. Leonard to use and occupy and enjoy said premise for sole use and benefit for and during the term of her natural life, and further that after the death of said Elizabeth A. Leonard to permit Bridget A. Coleman to use and occupy premises, and after termination of said life estates, premises shall

become absolute property of second party."

- 1915 Bridget A. Coleman died July 17, 1915. Will May 18, 1892. Probated August 10, 1915. Will Book 87, p. 499.
- 1916 Elizabeth A. Leonard died October 16, 1916. Will March 16, 1916. Probated November 8, 1916. Will Book 91, p. 237.
- 1953 President and Directors of Georgetown College to Emil A. Audette. Deed January 9, 1953. Recorded February 17, 1953. Liber 9900, folio 123.
- 1957 Emil A. Audette, unmarried, to Maurine Mulliner. Deed August 29, 1957. Recorded September 4, 1957. Liber 10913, folio 322.
- 1961 Maurine Mulliner, unmarried, to President and Directors of Georgetown College. Deed March 1, 1961. Recorded March 6, 1961. Liber 11564, folio 86.

4. Alterations and additions: Interior has been remodelled. Roof has new metal covering over shingles. Clapboards may be replacements.

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

Thomas E. Duvall, a millwright working in Georgetown, bought the property from Robert and Mary Martin in 1861. He died soon after purchasing the property, and the land was inherited by his wife, Mary E. Fernald Duvall.

For several years Mary Duvall (later Findley) operated a variety store on the corner of Langan (36th) and First (N) Streets from the house she inherited from Thomas Duvall. (City Directory).

In 1865 Mary Duvall married John T. Findley, a metropolitan policeman. A year later she subdivided Lot 62 and built the frame house, 113 First Street (now 3606 N Street) as an investment. Tax records for the year 1867 show an improvement of a two-story frame house on the land valued at \$1000. (Record Group 351, National Archives, Records of the City of Georgetown (DC), Microcopy 605, Roll 12).

The first occupant of the house was John J. Dolan, a clerk, who rented it for three years. The Findleys during this time lived at 53 Lingham (36th) Street; but from 1872 to 1876 they occupied the little frame house at 113 First themselves. In 1877 they rented the house to Henry Mills, an engineer, and moved to 94 West Street (now 3013 P). Mills was still listed at this address in 1881. John McDaniel, shown variously as cook, driver, and porter, occupied the 3606 N Street house from 1896 to 1917.

After this the house was rented to a succession of working people such as porters, domestics, cement finishers, and manual laborers. This group was part of a steady stream of workers who were drawn to this area by the number of service jobs required to maintain a university. (City Directories).

C. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Record Group 351, National Archives, Washington, D.C.
Records of the City of Georgetown (D.C.), 1800-79:
Assessment of Real and Personal Property, Microcopy 605, Roll
12 (1865-1870).

2. Secondary and published sources:

City Directories:

Boyd's Washington and Georgetown Directory, 1862, p. 192;
1864, p. 298; 1867, p. 233; 1868, p. 225; 1870, p. 450; 1871,
p. ix.

Boyd's Directory of the District of Columbia, 1872, p. 506;
1873, p. 597; 1874, p. 591; 1876, p. 220; 1877, p. 481; 1880,
pp. 287, 481; 1881, pp. 346, 546; 1896, p. 629.

Boyd's District of Columbia Directory, 1917, p. 790; 1924, p.
504; 1928, p. 243; 1936, p. 1707; 1941, p. 1218; 1942, p. 263.

Prepared by Volunteers
for the Commission of Fine Arts
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PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural Character: A post Civil War wood frame row house, the structure forms part of a group that preserves a mid-nineteenth century street character and scale.
2. Condition of fabric: The exterior is in generally good condition. The interior is in good condition but has been greatly remodelled (1969).

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: This two-story house with a full basement is a simple rectangle with a three-bay front and a depth of approximately 35'.
2. Foundation: Brick foundation walls are exposed at both the north (front) and south elevations. The north elevation exposure is approximately 3' from grade while at the south the exposure is 3'6". At both the north and south there are retaining walls allowing for stairs to the basement level.
3. Wall Construction: Frame with wood clapboard siding and 4" corner boards. Slight projection of wood window frames and the use of a metal flashing over the windows suggests the clapboard covers earlier siding.
4. Framing: Stud walls.
5. Porches and exterior stairs: There are brick entry stoops at both the north and south elevations. The north front stoop is 5'2" wide, extends 6'2" from house, has four risers from grade and a pair of metal railings. Both of the stoops appear to date from the mid-twentieth century.

Brick exterior stairways to the basement occur at both north and south elevations. The north stairway is an "L" with two risers down next to the entry stoop and platform and then six risers down from east to west to the basement doorway at the northwest corner of the house. The south (rear) basement access is also by an "L" stair down five risers from south to north to a platform, then three risers down from west to east.

6. Chimneys: There is one central three-flue brick chimney 3' 5" X 1' 10" at attic level. It appears to have been rebuilt in the mid-twentieth century.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: North (front) wood entry door consists of a pair of fluted pilasters supporting a Tuscan architrave. The door is six panel with the two upper panels of glass. Both appear to be mid-twentieth century additions.
 - b. Windows and shutters: Windows are six-over-six-light double hung wood sash with simple flat trim. The lower windows have metal flashing at the head, and the upper story windows have the head covered by a cornice board. The metal hinged moveable shutters have metal stops. The south elevation has aluminum storm sash on all windows.
8. Roof:
 - a. Shape and Covering: The roof is a simple low pitched gable with ridge running east-west. Present covering is standing seam metal over earlier wooden shingles.
 - b. Framing: As visible in the attic the framing consists of 3" X 4" wood rafters. The only tie is by second floor ceiling joists. There is no ridge pole.
 - c. Cornice, eaves: North elevation has a simple flat cornice board with four brackets. Gutter and downspouts are metal.

C. Description of Interior

1. Floor plans: The plan is a simple rectangle with central chimney and major stairway at the southwest corner.
 - a. First floor: Front and back rooms.
 - b. Second floor: A front and a back bedroom with a bath at the northwest corner.
 - c. Basement: Kitchen, dining room, a small bedroom and bath.
2. Stairways: The main stairway begins with corner winder steps and extends 14 risers from the southwest corner of the house up to the north to the second level. The stair is supported both by the north party wall and an east partition below the stringer. A straight run to the basement of twelve 8 1/2" risers running down from north to south extends under the main stair. Access to the attic is by means of a retractable ladder-stair.
3. Flooring: It is random width pine for the first and second floors. Basement has vinyl tile.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Walls and ceiling are plaster throughout.
5. Doorways and doors: Doors are simple four panel wood with simple wood moldings. Both appear to be twentieth century additions.
6. Decorative features: There is a simple wood baseboard, a 2" wood cornice molding but no chair rail or wainscot. All the trim appears to be mid-twentieth century.
7. Hardware: There is a variety of early and mid-twentieth century metal hardware.
8. Mechanical Equipment
 - a. Heating: Fireplaces in the basement and the first floor have brick firebacks and 1' 6" slate hearths. The chimney appears to have been reconstructed or refaced. Present heating system is central hot air with metal duct-work to each room
 - b. Lighting: There is a variety of mid-twentieth century fixtures.

D. Site

1. General setting and orientation: The house is on the south side of N Street between 36th and 37th Streets and with its east wall approximately 85' from the center line of 36th Street measured along N Street and set back approximately 12' from the center line of 36th Street. It is one of a group of frame row houses on this residential street near Georgetown University.
2. Enclosures: On N Street there is a wooden picket fence around a small garden fronting on the west half of the elevation. Wooden fences surround the tree shaded rear yard.
3. Walks: On the north, red brick paving extends from the stair and stoop to the brick public sidewalks.
4. Landscaping: The tree shaded rear yard has a brick paved patio extending out from stoop and retaining wall of the stairwell to the basement.

Prepared by: William P. Thompson
Architect
Historic American Buildings
Survey

PART II. PROJECT INFORMATION

These records were prepared as part of a project to record structures in the western part of the Georgetown Historic District in Washington, D.C. The project was conducted by the Commission of Fine Arts with the cooperation of the Historic American Buildings Survey. The resulting documentation was donated to HABS by the Commission and published in 1970 in HABS Selection Number 6, "Georgetown Architecture Northwest: Northwest Washington, District of Columbia". Research for the project was conducted by volunteers under the supervision of Ms. Nancy Black, staff member of the Commission of Fine Arts. Architectural information was prepared by The Office of Walter G. Peter, Jr., AIA. The photographs were taken by J. Alexander. The data was edited and prepared for transmittal to the Library of Congress by HABS architectural historian Emily J. Harris in 1979.